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ABSTRACT

A class "on" metaphor can be usefully distinguished from a class "in" metaphor. A class on metaphor concentrates on metaphor theory and function. To teach in metaphor would be to coach students in pragmatics, to guide them in the study of how key metaphors are used and help to structure discrete universes of discourse. For purposes of instruction, it is helpful to take theory and pragmatics as contrastive conceptual frames for orchestrating classes on the "what" and the "how" of metaphor. (Included are five outlines for objectives in classes on metaphor and in metaphor, a bibliography, four sample assignments, and a syllabus.) (TD)

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Teaching Metaphor: Theory and Pragmatics

A class **on** metaphor can be usefully differentiated from one **in** metaphor. We can think of a class on metaphor as concentrating on metaphor theory and functioning. To teach in metaphor would be to coach students in pragmatics, to guide them, that is, in the study of how key metaphors are used and help to structure discrete universes of discourse.

As you may know, the flow of scholarship on metaphor has increased to flood-stage over the past two or three decades. It ranges across a host of disciplines and can be dauntingly involved and specialized. In view of this I have found it efficacious, for purposes of instruction, to take theory and pragmatics as contrastive conceptual frames for orchestrating classes on the "what" and the "how" of metaphor.

The risks this expedient entails of oversimplifying the range and sophistication of speculative thought on the topic are minimized, I think, if we bear in mind that theory and pragmatics are dialectically related, and indeed hardly conceivable in definitive isolation from each other. We lose touch with the cash value of metaphor theory if we cut it off from its broadest practical implications. On the other hand, by discounting theory in the effort to facilitate our students' grasp of the different uses to which metaphor is put, we are likely to elide the formal implications of what we study. In so doing we may keep students from acquiring critical, generalized insights into the scope and limits of the disciplinary world-versions whose constitutive metaphors they investigate.

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However, if we keep sight of the essential interrelation of metaphor theory and pragmatics we will likely be quick to perceive and correct students construing as definitive accounts of metaphoric meaning that are either narrowly specialized or, at the other extreme, uncritically general. The tendency of students to oversimplify is hardly discouraged, certainly, by the numerous parochially disciplinary accounts that have identified metaphor as at bottom a rhetorical, semantic, semiotic, or otherwise formulaic phenomenon. Equally misleading are the uncritically broad applications that wind up classifying practically any instance of representation as metaphor.

Still--while most articulations of metaphor theory do concern themselves to some extent with use, and virtually all inquiries into metaphor use devote space to theory--when it comes to thinking about effective ways of teaching what Umberto Eco has tagged "metaphorology," it is helpful to begin as I have suggested, by assuming, at least provisionally, a dichotomy or bipolar continuum between theory and pragmatics. Those familiar with the influence of speech-act theory on the more prominent current conceptualizations of metaphor will recognize that this working assumption for developing classes on and in metaphor parallels Donald Davidson's distinction between word meaning and what words are used to do, as it does John Searle's between word meaning and speaker meaning.

In the time remaining, I'd like briefly to review some conceptual frameworks that I've outlined for developing classes both in and on metaphor, and then discuss a course that I taught

in metaphor. But first, as way of highlighting the on/in polarity in concrete terms I want to look for a moment at the opening line of this stanza of a Dickinson (254) poem:

> "HOPE" IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS--
> THAT PERCHES IN THE SOUL--
> AND SINGS THE TUNE WITHOUT THE WORDS--
> AND NEVER STOPS--AT ALL--

A class ON metaphor, emphasizing metaphor theory, and concerned with say Aristotelian approaches, would focus primarily on how "thing with feathers" or "bird" operates as a semantic deviation, as a figurative or literal comparisons, as an elliptical simile, as the transfer of ideas based on revealing analogies between two disparate sets of associations, or in terms of some combination of these postulated mechanisms. If, alternatively, the class were to take up the so-called interaction accounts, the aim would be to determine how "thing with feathers" functions as a vehicle or focus of "hope," the latter notion serving as the tenor, frame, or primary subject that the poet imaginatively amplifies through a metaphoric process that projects various implications of birdhood onto the conception of "hope," in what amounts to a borrowing between or intercourse of thoughts.

A class IN metaphor, with the emphasis on pragmatics, would be concerned with things like the truth, drama, and concision of the poet's depictively communicated definition of "hope." The goal in this case would be to enable students to apprehend the aesthetic efficacy of Dickinson's imagery, to afford them direct access, as it were, to her poetic vision, to get them to understand how Dickinson uses metaphor to convey insight in perceptual rather than in conceptual terms.

If you look at the handout [**ATTACHED**] you will notice that it outlines objectives for both introductory and advanced levels of study for classes in and on metaphor. Listed under each heading are examples of some appropriate texts. After the bibliography that follows the outline, I've appended four reading-comprehension assignments and the syllabus from the multidisciplinary course in the pragmatics of metaphor that I taught in the Honors Program at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

HANDOUT

Courses ON Metaphor

I. Individual Approaches

A. INTRODUCTORY LEVEL: teach the content and conceptual frame of a particular approach to metaphor; consider how the account can be applied practically.

Aristotle, **Poetics** (1457b, 1459a) and **Rhetoric** (1406b, 1410b, 1412a); Fogelin, **Figuratively Speaking**, chap. 3.
Richards, "Metaphor"; Black, "Metaphor."
Lakoff and Johnson, "Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language"; Lakoff and Turner, **More than Cool Reason**.

B. ADVANCED LEVEL: critically assess the theoretical cogency and practicability of a particular approach.

On Aristotelian conceptions: Stanford, **Greek Metaphor**; Shibles, **Analysis of Metaphor**, Appendix A; Searle, "Metaphor"; Stambovsky, **The Depictive Image**, chap. 1, sect. 1; Fogelin, chap.4; Bartel, **Metaphors and Symbols**.
On interaction views (Richards, Black): Shibles, Appendix C; Black, "More about Metaphor"; Searle, "Metaphor"; Scheffler, **Beyond the Letter**, chap. 3, sects. 7 and 8; Stambovsky, chap. 1, sect. 2; Johnson, **The Body in the Mind** (1989), chap. 4.
On cognitive process accounts (Lakoff and Johnson): Mac Cormac, **A Cognitive Theory of Metaphor**, chap. 3; Fogelin, chap. 6; Levin, **Metaphoric Worlds**, chap. 1; Gerhart and Russell, "The Cognitive Effect of Metaphor."

II. Historical and Comparative Study of Alternative Views

A. INTRODUCTORY LEVEL: survey the history of the idea of metaphor; review the changing focus and orientation of succeeding predominant views; compare the interpretive implications of alternative accounts by applying them to a variety of metaphors in different disciplines.

Hawkes, **Metaphor**; Johnson 1981, Introduction; selected metaphors from a plurality of discursive realms.

B. ADVANCED LEVEL: close analysis of competing standpoints; informed critical determination of the issues at stake in the prominent scholarly debates on the topic.

General. Hawkes, Johnson 1981, Introduction; Scheffler, chap. 3; Sacks, **On Metaphor**; Ortony, part I; Ricoeur, **The Rule of Metaphor** (1977), study 3; Stambovsky, chap. 1; Cooper, **Metaphor**, chap. 1.

Specific. Fogelin (comparativist--Aristotelian); Levin, **Metaphoric Worlds**, chap. 1 (literalist--romantic); Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean" (literalist--speech act) Black, "How Metaphors Work," Bergmann, "Metaphorical Assertions," Davies, "Truth-Values and Metaphors," and Novitz, "Metaphor, Derrida, and Davidson"; Levin, **The Semantics of Metaphor** (linguistic--semantic), Cureton, "Metaphor without Analogy," Ricoeur 1977, study 3 and study 8, sect. 4, and Hrushovski, "Poetic Metaphor and Frames of Reference"; Yoos, "A Phenomenological Look at Metaphor" (phenomenological).

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Courses IN Metaphor

I. Single Author

A. INTRODUCTORY LEVEL: explore how a seminal author utilizes metaphor; determine how this particular use of metaphor shapes the author's discourse and perspective.

Emerson, "Circles" (philosophy); Freud, "The Oedipus Complex," in **General Introduction to Psycho-analysis** and **The Ego and the Id**; McNeill, **The Human Condition** (cultural history); Thomas, "Societies as Organisms"; Hardin, "Living on a Lifeboat" (ecology); Kuhn, **The Structure of Scientific Revolutions** (history of scientific thought); Gerzon, "The Frontiersman," in **A Choice of Heroes** (sociology).

B. ADVANCED LEVEL: investigate critical assessments of a seminal author's use of metaphor and of the perspective established by it; analyze its influence on a particular universe of discourse and its contribution to knowledge more generally.

On Emerson's use of metaphor: Cavell, "Thinking of Emerson"; Cox, "R. W. Emerson: The Circle of the Eye"; Ellison, **Emerson's Romantic Style**, chap. 9.

On Freud's use of metaphor: Edelson, **Language and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis**; Fromm, **Greatness and Limitations of Freud's Thought.**

On Kuhn's use of metaphor: Gutting, **Paradigms and Revolutions**; Hacking, **Scientific Revolutions**; Scheffler, **Science and Subjectivity**, chap. 4.

HANDOUT

II. Single Universe of Discourse

A. INTRODUCTORY LEVEL: explore the functioning of "root" or "cardinal" or "basic conceptual" metaphors in a particular discursive realm to familiarize students with its focus and cognitive implications; enable students thereby to construe and extrapolate from data in the ways of making meaning that those metaphors generate.

Jones, **Physics as Metaphor**; Rosenberg, "The Pervasive Role of Metaphors in Marketing Science"; Ivie, "Metaphor and the Rhetorical Invention of Cold War 'Idealists'" (political rhetoric); Howe, "Metaphor in Contemporary American Political Discourse"; Turbayne, **The Myth of Metaphor** (philosophy of science); Lakoff and Turner, **More than Cool Reason** (poetry); Laszlo, **The Systems View of the World** (systems philosophy).

B. ADVANCED LEVEL: critically assess metaphorically articulated aspects of the "world version" of a particular discursive realm; analyze its discourse and its tacit assumptions about the nature of reality in view of metaphors that specialists in the field have employed.

Rorty, **Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature**, chap. 1, sects. 4 and 5, **Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity**, chap. 1 (intellectual history); Tracy, "Metaphor and Religion"; Battisti, "Changing Metaphors of Political Structures" (political science); Boyd, "Metaphor and Theory Change" (philosophy of science); Leary, **Metaphors in the History of Psychology**; Putnam, "Music and the Metaphor of Touch" (aesthetics); Graves, "Functions of Key Metaphors in Early Quaker Sermons, 1671-1700" (special topic history: Quaker homiletics); Brown, "Rhetoric and the Science of History: The Debate between Evolutionism and Empiricism as a Conflict of Metaphors" (general history: historical sociology); Stambovsky, "Metaphor and Historical Understanding" (metahistory: historiography).

III. Multidisciplinary

A. INTRODUCTORY LEVEL: comparative inquiry into how different uses of metaphor in various discursive realms help to clarify what is distinctive about alternative disciplinary orientations; familiarize students with a plurality of discursive idioms through a comparative study of metaphor.

Hawkes, **Metaphor** or Johnson 1981, Introduction; Ortony, "Metaphor: A Multidisciplinary Problem"; Gerhart and Russell, **Metaphoric Process: The Creation of Scientific and Religious Understanding**; Gardner and Winner, "Metaphoric Competence" (psychology/ metaphorology); Kuhns, "Metaphor as Plausible Inference in Poetry and Philosophy"; Leshan and Margenau, **Einstein's Space and Van Gogh's Sky**, chap. 12 (physical science/social science); Lakoff and Johnson, "The Metaphorical Logic of Rape" (generative semantics/ sociology); comparative study of works listed under **I.A.**

B. ADVANCED LEVEL: investigate the cognitive and practical implications of contrasts in the discourse of alternative disciplines based on their use of metaphor; in the context of this investigation inquire into the limits of the "world version" each of the disciplinary perspectives articulates.

Romanyshyn, **Psychological Life: From Science to Metaphor; Journal of Mind and Behavior**, vol. 3, nos. 3 and 4 (double issue containing papers presented at the Root Metaphor Conference, an interdisciplinary symposium, May 1982); **Metaphor and Symbolic Activity** (interdisciplinary quarterly journal); Ricoeur, **The Rule of Metaphor: Multidisciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language** (rhetoric, linguistics, and philosophy); Foss, **Symbol and Metapor in Human Experience** (aesthetics, religion, ethics); Levin, **Metaphoric Worlds**, chap. 4 ("Scientific and Poetic Truths").

HANDOUT

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HANDOUT

Sample Assignment: **Physics as Metaphor**, Roger S. Jones

1. How does Jones distinguish metaphor from "more passive comparisons"?
2. Explain the metaphoric observation by Sir Arthur Eddington to which Jones alludes in the Introduction.
3. What does Jones mean by "subjectivity" in science?
4. What does Jones say in the Introduction about how he intends to treat physics in his book? What is his rationale?
5. What does Jones see as the purpose of his book?
6. Why does Jones think of the four foundational concepts in physics as metaphors? Why does he term them "cardinal" metaphors?
7. In chap. 3, how does Jones explain the meaning of metaphor?
8. Explain how the vignette that Jones comes up with in chap. 3 communicates the sense that "space is mind"?
9. What role does the idea of "extension" play in our conception of space?
10. What does Jones refer to as the "totem experience"? How is scientific experience a kind of "negative totemism"?

HANDOUT

Sample Assignment: "Circles," Ralph Waldo Emerson

1. Identify and briefly discuss five significant ideas that the "circle" metaphor generates in this essay.

2. Drawing from your personal experience, explain the following Emersonian observation: "Our moods do not believe in each other."

3. After looking up the words whose meaning you are not sure of, cite some examples of ways that people act which illustrate what the "circle" metaphor depicts in this first sentence of the essay's concluding paragraph: "The one thing which we seek with insatiable desire is to forget ourselves, to be surprised out of our propriety, to lose our sempiternal memory and to do something without knowing how or why; in short to draw a new circle."

4. Discuss how Emerson relates "circle" as metaphor to the idea of "perspective" (point of view).

5. Citing three examples that you have not previously discussed, explain how Emerson utilizes metaphor to stimulate and direct our thought.

HANDOUT

Sample Assignment: "Conceptual Metaphor in Everday Language," George Lakoff and Mark Johnson

1. What do Lakoff and Johnson refer to as our "conceptual system"? How do they see it as related to metaphor?
2. In what sense do we live by the "argument-is-war" metaphor in our culture?
3. Citing a conceptual metaphor with which you are familiar, explain Lakoff and Johnson's argument that metaphors structure concepts.
4. Cite an example of a metaphorical concept that in some way structures both what we do and how we understand what we do.
5. What do Lakoff and Johnson understand as the "essence of metaphor"?
6. Using the "time-is-money" metaphor, explain what Lakoff and Johnson mean by "entailment relationships" between metaphors.
7. Explain and illustrate what Lakoff and Johnson have in mind when they point out that, "A metaphorical concept can hide an aspect of our exprience."
8. Illustrate what Lakoff and Johnson mean by "physical" and "orientational" metaphors.

HANDOUT

Sample Assignment: **Metaphor**, Terence Hawkes

1. Give Hawkes's definition of metaphor and employ it to explain how one metaphor in a favorite poem or song works.
2. Explain "tropes," and discuss in terms of some examples the meaning of each of the three tropes Hawkes identifies.
3. Give an example of each of the four types of metaphor that Aristotle identified, explaining how each of your examples illustrates one of Aristotle's definitions.
4. According to Hawkes, how did the idea of metaphor begin to change after Aristotle?
5. What distinction does Hawkes draw between Elizabethan metaphors and those of modern poets?
6. What, according to Hawkes, did the Romantics see as the difference between Plato and Aristotle? How did that affect their view of metaphor?
7. Why is Vico an important figure in the evolution of thought about metaphor?
8. Explain Coleridge's notion of the Imagination. What relationship does Hawkes see between this notion and the Romantic conception of metaphor?
9. How does Hawkes understand Coleridge's thought on metaphor as an advance over the Aristotelian approaches?
10. How does Hawkes explain, in the section on I. A. Richards, the role of metaphor with respect to how we use language?
11. Using a familiar metaphor as an illustration, explain Richards's interaction theory of metaphor.
12. What does Owen Barfield mean by "tarning"? Explain this in terms of a familiar metaphor.
13. Discuss the claim that no difference exists between metaphor and simile. What is your view?
14. Discuss the two most significant points you think Hawkes makes in the section on anthropology about the relationship between language and reality.
15. Explain: "Our metaphors...unconsciously reflect a particular 'reality'" (p. 85).
16. Citing two examples, explain what Hawkes means when he states that "metaphor in all societies will have a 'normative' and reinforcing aspect, as well as an 'explanatory' one" (p. 91).

HANDOUT

University of Massachusetts at Amherst
METAPHOR IN THE SCIENCES AND THE HUMANITIES
Honors 297A

Spring 1986
MW 4:00-5:15
Machmer W-21

Phillip Stambovsky
Office Hours: MW 2:00-3:00 P.M.
Machmer E-27C

TEXTS: **Metaphor**, Terence Hawkes; **A Choice of Heroes**, Mark Gerzon; **Physics as Metaphor**, Roger S. Jones; **The Systems View of the World**, Ervin Laszlo; "Synectics," from **Stimulating Creativity**, Morris Stein (handout); excerpts from **General Introduction to Psycho-analysis** and **The Ego and the Id**, Sigmund Freud (handout); "Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language," George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (handout); "The Pond in Winter," from **Walden**, Henry David Thoreau (handout); "Circles," Ralph Waldo Emerson (handout); "Changing Metaphors of Political Structures," Giuseppa Saccaro-Battisti (handout); "Music and the Metaphor of Touch," Daniel Putnam (handout); selected poems of John Donne, Emily Dickinson, and Wallace Stevens (handouts).

1/29	W	Introduction
2/3	M	Hawkes: the history of the idea of metaphor
2/5	W	History of the idea of metaphor
2/10	M	Stein: metaphor in synectics GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Larry Rosenberg (SOM)
2/12	W	Gerzon: metaphor in sociology
2/18	T	Metaphor in sociology
2/19	W	Freud: psychoanalytic metaphor
2/24	M	GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Richard Noland (English)
2/26	W	Jones: metaphor in physics
3/3	M	Metaphor in physics
3/5	W	Metaphor in physics
3/10	M	GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Michael Kreisler (Physics)
3/12	W	Thoreau: transcendental metaphor
3/24	M	Darwinian metaphor; GUEST SPEAKER: Professor C. K. Smith (English)
3/26	W	Emerson: transcendental/philosophic metaphor
3/31	M	Peer editing session, first essay
4/2	W	Lakoff and Johnson: metaphor, semantics, and cognition
4/7	M	Metaphor, semantics, and cognition
4/9	W	Laszlo: metaphor in systems thinking; first essay due
4/14	M	Metaphor in systems thinking
4/16	W	Metaphor in systems thinking
4/23	W	Saccaro-Battisti: metaphor in political theory
4/28	M	Putnam: metaphor in music theory
4/30	W	Visual metaphor; SEMINAR GUEST: Mark Roskill (Art History)
5/5	M	Donne: "metaphysical" poetic metaphor
5/7	W	Preparation of seminar publication
5/12	M	Dickinson and Stevens: poetic metaphor; SEMINAR GUEST: Professor Robert Bagg (English)
5/14	W	Poetic metaphor; course overview
5/16	F	Second essay due